

# Amusement and Recreation Services

(SIC 79)

## SIGNIFICANT POINTS

- Over 40 percent of all workers have no formal education beyond high school.
- Employment growth, along with high turnover, should create numerous job opportunities.
- Earnings are relatively low, reflecting the large number of part-time and seasonal jobs.

### Nature of the Industry

As leisure time and personal incomes have grown across the Nation, so has the amusement and recreation services industry. This industry is made up of about 99,000 establishments, ranging from theme parks to fitness centers. Practically any activity that occupies a person's leisure time, excluding motion pictures and videotape rentals, is part of the amusement and recreation services industry. The diverse range of activities offered by this industry can be categorized into three broad groups—sports, performing arts, and amusement including gaming.

*Sports.* This sector includes professional sports, as well as establishments providing sports facilities and services to amateurs. Commercial sports clubs are made up of establishments that operate professional and amateur athletic clubs and promote athletic events. Every possible type of sport can be found in these establishments, including baseball, basketball, boxing, football, ice hockey, soccer, wrestling, and even auto racing. Professional and amateur companies involved with sports promotion also are part of this sector, as are sports establishments where gambling is allowed, such as auto, dog, and horse racetracks.

Also included in this segment of the industry are physical fitness facilities that feature exercise and weight loss programs, gyms, health clubs, and day spas. These establishments also frequently offer aerobic dance, yoga, and exercise classes. Other amusement and recreation businesses include bowling centers that rent lanes and equipment for tenpin and duckpin bowling.

These facilities may be open to the public or offered on a membership basis. Sports and recreation clubs open only to members and their guests include some golf, yacht, tennis, racquetball, hunt, and gun clubs. Public golf courses, unlike private clubs, offer facilities to the general public on a fee basis.

*Performing arts.* A variety of businesses and groups involved in live theatrical and musical performances are included in this segment. Theatrical production companies, for example, coordinate all aspects of producing a play or theater event, including employing actors and actresses. Agents represent actors and assist them in finding jobs. Booking agencies line up performance engagements for theatrical groups. Costume design management companies design costumes for productions. Also included are lighting and stage crews that handle the technical aspects of productions.

Performers of live musical entertainment include popular music artists, dance bands, orchestras, jazz musicians, and

rock-and-roll bands. Orchestras range from major professional orchestras with million dollar budgets to community orchestras, often with part-time schedules. Also in this segment are dance studios, schools, and halls, which provide places for professional and amateur dancers to practice, perform, and learn. The majority of these dance troupes perform ballet or modern dance.

*Amusement.* A wide variety of establishments provide amusement for a growing number of customers. Some of these businesses provide video game, pinball, and gaming machines to amusement parks, arcades, and casinos. Casinos and other gaming establishments that offer off-track betting are a rapidly growing part of this sector. Also included in this segment are amusement and theme parks, which range in size from local carnivals to multi-acre parks. These establishments may have mechanical rides, shows, and refreshment stands. Other amusement and recreation services include day camps, fireworks display services, go-cart rentals, rodeos, riding stables, waterslides, skating rinks, ski lifts, and establishments offering rental sporting goods.

### Working Conditions

Jobs in amusement and recreation services are more likely to be part time than those in other industries. In fact, the average worker in the amusement and recreation industry worked a 27-hour workweek in 1998. Entertainers, actors, and musicians were most likely to work part time, due to the large number of performers competing for a limited number of positions. The majority of performers are unable to support themselves in this profession alone and are forced to supplement their income through other jobs.

Many types of amusement and recreation establishments dramatically increase employment during the summer and either scale back employment during the winter or close down completely. Workers may be required to work nights and holidays, because most establishments are busiest during major holidays. Some jobs require extensive travel. Music and dance troupes, for example, frequently tour or travel to major metropolitan areas across the country, in hopes of attracting large audiences.

Many in this industry work outdoors, whereas others may work in hot, crowded, or noisy conditions. Some jobs, such as those at fitness facilities or in amusement parks, involve some manual labor tasks and, thus, require physical strength and stamina. Also, athletes, dancers, and many other performers must be in particularly good physical condition. Many

jobs include customer service responsibilities, so employees must be able to work well with the public.

In 1998, cases of work-related illness and injury averaged 8.1 for every 100 full-time workers, higher than the average of 7.1 for the entire private sector. Risks of injury are high in some jobs, especially for athletes. Although most injuries are minor, including sprains and muscle pulls, they may prevent an employee from working for a period of time.

## Employment

The amusement and recreation services industry provided about 1.6 million jobs in 1998. Miscellaneous amusement and recreation services—which includes amusement parks, coin-operated amusement devices, public golf courses, membership sports and recreation clubs, and physical fitness facilities—accounted for 3 out of 4 jobs (table 1).

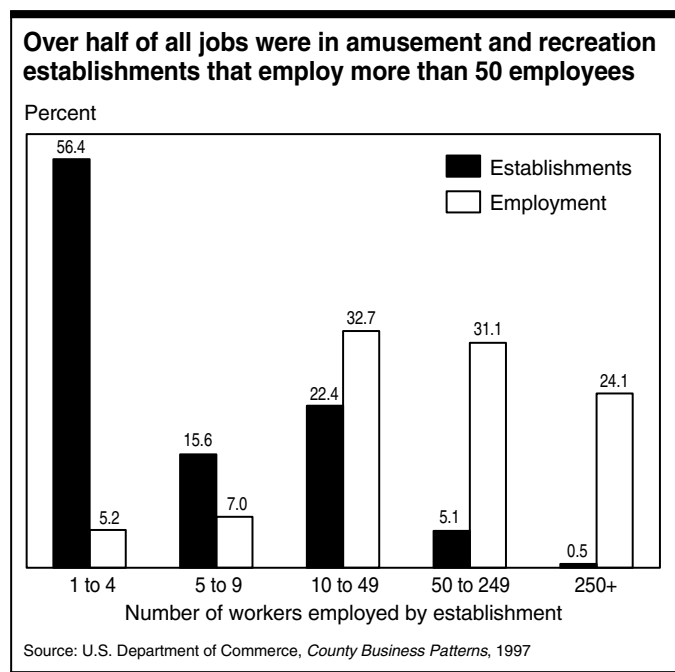
**Table 1. Employment in amusement and recreation services by segment, 1998**

(Employment in thousands)

Industry segment	Employment
Amusement and recreation services .....	1,601
Miscellaneous amusement and recreation services .....	1,189
Producers, orchestras, and entertainers .....	176
Commercial sports .....	127
Bowling centers .....	82
Dance studios, schools, and halls .....	27

Although most establishments in the amusement and recreation industry are small, over half of all jobs were in establishments that employ more than 50 workers (chart).

The amusement and recreation services industry is characterized by a large number of seasonal and part-time positions and workers who are younger than the average for all industries. The majority of workers are under the age of 35. Many



businesses in the industry increase hiring during the summer, often employing high school- and college-age workers

## Occupations in the Industry

About 44 percent of workers in the industry are employed in service occupations (table 2). *Amusement and recreation attendants*, the largest occupation in amusement and recreation services, perform a variety of duties depending on where they are employed. Common duties include setting up games, handing out sports equipment, providing caddy services for golfers, collecting money, and operating amusement park rides.

Other service workers include *waiters* and *waitresses*, who serve food in entertainment establishments; *food counter and fountain workers*, who serve and sometimes prepare food for patrons; and *bartenders*, who mix and serve drinks in amusement establishments.

Personal, buildings, and grounds service occupations include *houseworkers*, *janitors*, and *general cleaning crews*, who clean up after shows or sporting events and are responsible for the daily cleaning and upkeep of facilities. *Landscaping*, *groundskeeping*, *nursery*, *greenhouse*, and *lawn service workers* care for athletic fields and golf courses. These workers maintain artificial and natural turf fields, mark boundaries, and paint team logos. They also mow, water, and fertilize natural athletic fields and vacuum and disinfect synthetic fields. Protective service occupations include *security guards*, who patrol the property and guard against theft, vandalism, and illegal entry. At sporting events, guards maintain order and direct patrons to various facilities.

Professional specialty occupations account for 17 percent of all jobs in this industry. One of the most well-known, *athletes*, perform in a variety of sports. Professional athletes compete in events for compensation, either through salaries or prize money. Organizations such as the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) and the National Football League (NFL) sanction events for professionals. Few athletes are able to make it to the professional level, where high salaries are common. In some professional sports, minor leagues offer lower salaries with a chance to develop skills through competition before advancing to major league play.

*Coaches*, *athletic trainers*, and *fitness instructors* train athletes to perform at their highest level. Often they are experienced athletes who have retired and are able to provide insight from their own experiences to players. *Referees* and *umpires*, even in professional sports, usually work part time and often have other full-time jobs. For example, many professional sport referees and umpires officiate at amateur games, as well.

*Musicians* may play musical instruments, sing, compose, arrange music, or conduct groups in instrumental or vocal performances. The specific skills and responsibilities of musicians vary widely by type of instrument, size of ensemble, and style of music. For example, musicians can play jazz, classical, or popular music, either alone or in groups, ranging from small rock bands to large symphony orchestras.

*Actors* entertain and communicate with people through their interpretation of dramatic and other roles. They can belong to a variety of performing groups, ranging from community theater shows and local dinner theaters to full-scale Broadway productions. *Dancers* express ideas, stories, rhythm, and sound with their bodies through different types of dance, including ballet, modern dance, tap, and jazz. Dancers usually perform in a

troupe, although some perform solo. Many become teachers when their performing careers end. *Directors* interpret plays or scripts and give directions to actors and dancers. They conduct rehearsals, audition cast members, and approve choreography. *Producers* select plays or scripts, arrange financing, and decide on the size and content of the production and its budget. They also hire directors, principal members of the cast and production staff members, and negotiate contracts with personnel.

*Recreation workers* plan, organize, and direct activities. They generally are employed by organizations such as schools; theme parks, and other tourist attractions; or health, sports, and other recreational clubs. Recreation workers schedule organized events to structure leisure time. These programs are oriented toward activities, such as sports and fitness or arts and crafts.

About 12 percent of all jobs in this industry are in marketing and sales occupations. The largest of these, *cashiers*, often use a cash register to receive money and give change to customers. *Counter and rental clerks* check out rental equipment to customers, receive orders for service, and handle cash transactions.

About 7 percent of industry employment is in administrative support occupations. *Information clerks*, one of the larger occupations in this category, answer questions and provide general information to patrons. Other large occupations in this group include *general office clerks* and *secretaries*.

Executive, administrative, and managerial occupations make up 7 percent of employment in this industry. Managerial duties in the performing arts include marketing, business management, event booking, fundraising, and public outreach. *Recreation supervisors* and *park superintendents* oversee personnel, budgets, grounds and facility maintenance, and land and wildlife resources. Some common administrative jobs in sports are *tournament director*, *health club manager*, and *sports program director*.

Precision production, craft, and repair occupations make up 4 percent of industry employment. *General utility maintenance repairers* are the largest occupation in this group.

## Training and Advancement

Around half of all workers in the amusement and recreation industry have no formal education beyond high school. In the case of performing artists or athletes, talent and years of training are more important than education. However, upper-level management jobs usually require a college degree.

Most of these service jobs require little or no previous training or education beyond high school. Many companies hire young, unskilled workers, such as students, to perform low-paying, seasonal jobs. Amusement parks prefer workers who are at least 17 years old. Employers look for people with good interpersonal skills to work with the public.

In physical fitness facilities, aerobic and instructional exercise teachers must be certified to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and often must be certified by the Aerobics and Fitness Association of America. Sometimes fitness workers become health club managers or owners. To advance to a management position, a degree in physical education, sports medicine, or exercise physiology is useful. Certification from a professional organization also is beneficial. This involves knowledge of CPR, experience as an instructor at a health club, and passing written and oral exams, covering a variety of areas, including anatomy, nutrition, and fitness testing.

**Table 2. Employment of wage and salary workers in amusement and recreation services by occupation, 1998 and projected change, 1998-2008**

(Employment in thousands)

Occupation	1998 Employment		1998-2008 Percent change
	Number	Percent	
<b>All occupations</b> .....	1,601	100.0	31.7
<b>Service</b> .....	700	43.7	25.9
Amusement and recreation attendants .....	191	11.9	39.1
Waiters and waitresses .....	88	5.5	-11.0
Janitors and cleaners, including maids and housekeeping cleaners .....	50	3.1	25.0
Food counter, fountain, and related workers .....	50	3.1	25.1
Bartenders .....	38	2.4	20.1
Guards .....	36	2.3	27.6
Ushers, lobby attendants, and ticket takers .....	28	1.8	26.3
Cooks, restaurant .....	27	1.7	8.6
Food preparation workers .....	25	1.5	29.2
Child-care workers .....	21	1.3	40.2
Dining room and cafeteria attendants and bar helpers .....	17	1.1	28.9
Cooks, short order and fast food .....	16	1.0	32.1
<b>Professional specialty</b> .....	271	17.0	35.6
Instructors and coaches, sports and physical training .....	120	7.5	44.6
Musicians, singers, and related workers .....	38	2.4	18.5
Athletes, coaches, umpires, and related workers .....	20	1.3	25.0
Actors, directors, and producers .....	16	1.0	18.5
Adult and vocational education teachers .....	17	1.0	24.4
Recreation workers .....	15	1.0	45.4
<b>Marketing and sales</b> .....	193	12.1	44.4
Cashiers .....	69	4.3	32.6
Counter and rental clerks .....	52	3.2	58.2
Marketing and sales worker supervisors .....	31	2.0	50.8
<b>Administrative support, including clerical</b> .....	108	6.8	28.3
General office clerks .....	22	1.4	41.0
Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks .....	20	1.2	14.5
Receptionists and information clerks .....	20	1.2	42.7
Secretaries .....	18	1.1	12.4
<b>Executive, administrative, and managerial</b> .....	108	6.8	32.9
General managers and top executives .....	46	2.9	35.9
<b>Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and related</b> .....	105	6.6	44.8
Laborers, landscaping and groundskeeping .....	91	5.7	45.5
<b>Precision production, craft, and repair</b> .....	67	4.2	18.7
Maintenance repairers, general utility .....	35	2.2	1.2
<b>Operators, fabricators, and laborers</b> .....	40	2.5	37.1
Helpers, laborers, and material movers, hand .....	25	1.5	34.0
<b>All other occupations</b> .....	8	0.5	39.9

In the arts, employment in professional specialty occupations usually requires a great deal of talent. There are many highly talented performers, creating intense competition for every opening. Performers such as musicians, dancers, actors, and actresses often study their professions most of their lives, taking private lessons and spending hours practicing. Usually, performers have completed some college or related study. Musicians, dancers, and actors often go on to become teachers, requiring the completion of at least a bachelor's degree. Musicians who complete a graduate degree in music sometimes move on to a career as a conductor. Dancers often become choreographers, and actors can advance into producer and director jobs.

Almost all arts administrators have completed 4 years of college, and the majority possess a master's degree or a doctorate. Experience in marketing and business is helpful because promoting events is a large part of the job.

Entry-level supervisory or professional jobs in recreation sometimes require completion of a 2-year associate degree in parks and recreation at a junior college. Completing a 4-year bachelor's degree in this field is necessary for high-level supervisory positions. Students can specialize in such areas as aquatics, therapeutic recreation, aging and leisure, and environmental studies. Those who obtain graduate degrees in the field and have years of experience can usually obtain administrative or university teaching positions. The National Recreation and Parks Association certifies individuals who meet eligibility requirements for professional and technical jobs. Certified Leisure Professionals must pass an exam; earn a bachelor's degree with a major in recreation, park resources, or leisure services; and have at least 2 years of relevant full-time experience.

## Earnings

Earnings in amusement and recreation services generally are low, reflecting the large number of part-time and seasonal jobs. Nonsupervisory workers in amusement and recreation services averaged \$258 a week in 1998, compared to \$442 throughout private industry.

Earnings vary according to occupation and segment of the industry. For example, some professional athletes earn millions, but competition for these positions is intense, and most athletes are unable to even reach the minor leagues. Many service workers make the minimum wage or a little more. Many actors go long periods with little or no income from acting, so they are forced to work at second jobs. Earnings in selected occupations in amusement and recreation services in 1997 appear in table 3.

Because many amusement and theme parks dramatically increase employment during vacation periods, employment for a number of jobs in the industry is seasonal. Theme parks, for example, frequently hire young workers, often students, for summer employment. Also, many sports are not played all year, so athletes and people in the service jobs associated with those sports are often seasonally employed.

Employers in some segments of this industry offer benefits not available in other industries. For instance, benefits for workers in some theme parks include free passes to the park, transportation to and from work, housing, scholarships, and discounts on park merchandise.

Although unions are not common in most segments of this industry, they are important in the performing arts sector.

Virtually all actors, actresses, and performers are members of a union. Consequently, earnings of most performers are determined by union contracts that specify minimum salary rates and working conditions.

**Table 3. Median hourly earnings of the largest occupations in amusement and recreation services, 1997**

Occupation	Amusement and recreation services	All industries
General managers and top executives ...	\$18.24	\$26.05
Instructors and coaches, sports and physical training .....	9.80	10.15
Guards and watch guards .....	7.72	7.57
Laborers, landscaping and groundskeeping .....	7.48	8.08
Cashiers .....	6.80	6.22
Bartenders .....	6.56	5.94
Counter and rental clerks .....	6.35	6.67
Combined food preparation and service workers .....	5.94	5.72
Amusement and recreation attendants ...	5.77	5.88
Waiters and waitresses .....	5.75	5.59

## Outlook

Wage and salary jobs in amusement and recreation services are projected to increase 32 percent over the 1998-2008 period, more than double the rate of growth projected for the entire economy. Growing participation in amusement and recreation—reflecting increasing incomes, leisure time, and awareness of the health benefits of physical fitness—will provide a large market for establishments providing amusement and recreational facilities and services.

Changing demographics of the Nation will also have a major impact on industry employment. For example, amusement and recreation services are expected to increasingly target the growing elderly population. Consequently, employment opportunities may be better in those establishments, such as cruise ships and golf courses, which serve active adults between 50 and 75 years old. Continued growth in hospital and hotel fitness centers and instructional exercise programs, especially those designed and marketed for retirees, should also lead to more job openings. Growth is also expected in those amusement and recreation services, such as health spas and fitness centers, that cater to younger adults in their 20s and 30s with steadily rising incomes.

In addition to these increases, employment in the performing arts will grow rapidly, along with demand for entertainment from a growing population. However, the supply of workers in this sector will also rise, because of the appeal of these jobs, insuring continued intense competition. Additionally, amusement and theme parks should experience steady growth and offer many seasonal and part-time job opportunities.

The amusement and recreation services industry has relied heavily on workers under the age of 25 to fill seasonal and unskilled positions. Although the pool of these workers will

grow in coming years, opportunities should be good for young, seasonal, part-time, and unskilled workers. In addition, the industry is expected to hire a growing number of workers in other age groups.

### **Sources of Additional Information**

For additional information about careers and training in the amusement and recreation services industry, write to:

- National Recreation and Parks Association, 22377 Belmont Ridge Rd., Ashburn, VA 20148.  
Internet: <http://www.nrpa.org>

Information on the following occupations employed in amusement and recreation services may be found in the 2000-01 *Occupational Outlook Handbook*:

- Actors, directors, and producers
- Adult and vocational education teachers
- Dancers and choreographers
- Landscaping, groundskeeping, nursery, greenhouse, and lawn service occupations
- Guards
- Musicians, singers, and related workers
- Recreation workers